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UA3/10/2 A Look Back & Forward

WKU President's Office - Caboni

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Fellow Faculty and Staff:

What an amazing weekend! Thank you for your participation in the Commencement activities Friday and Saturday. Despite the heat, the Friday evening Topper Walk, Commencement Ceremony and Big Red Bash combined for a great celebration in honor of nearly 3,300 graduating students and their families. I enjoyed shaking graduates' hands on Saturday during the college recognition ceremonies as well. Thank you for embracing this new approach, and I appreciate the work of all involved in the planning for each event.

This year has been filled with both tremendous challenges and remarkable achievements, and I'm grateful for the manner in which our university family has come together to support one another and especially our students. Thank you to those who have provided input or have been involved in the initiatives we have undertaken to address our budget issues and strategic plan. Your engagement is critical, and transparency in the process is important. A full accounting of our Budget Stabilization Plan is available at https://www.wku.edu/transparency-and-accountability/budget_stabilization_plan.php, and you can find information pertaining to strategic planning at <https://www.wku.edu/strategicplan/> and the RAMP budget model development at <https://www.wku.edu/ramp/>.

The Strategic Planning Steering Committee and subcommittees have completed much of their work, and the consensus is that we will focus our ten-year strategic plan on Our Students; the WKU Experience; Preparation for Life and Work; Our People; and Our Community, which includes the larger region we serve and our work to be globally focused. The Committee will use the summer to finalize the plan elements. We will submit the plan to the Board of Regents for approval in August, and we will launch it officially at the Faculty-Staff Convocation later that month.

As you know, we recently announced the appointment of a new Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs. Professor Terry Ballman, who currently serves as the Dean of the College of Arts and Letters at California State University, San Bernardino, will begin her duties at WKU on August 1. Professor Ballman has a wide range of experience that will serve our campus well as we implement a new strategic plan. She is particularly enthusiastic about our mission to be a student-centered, applied research university. Please help us welcome her to our Hilltopper family.

We are incredibly grateful for current Provost David Lee's leadership and service to WKU, which has spanned more than 40 years. Dr. Lee will continue to serve as University Historian upon his official retirement this summer.

Finally, WKU has worked for a number of years to support and advance student scholars in their pursuit of prestigious national and international scholarships. So far this year, 63 students and recent graduates have received awards, including a Truman award, a record number of Critical Language Scholarships (11 plus two alternates), 13 Benjamin A. Gilman Scholarships and a Thomas R. Pickering Fellowship. For the fourth consecutive time and fifth time overall, WKU was named a top Fulbright-producing institution by the Chronicle of Higher Education and was recognized as a top producer of Gilman International Scholars. These outstanding achievements by our students are excellent examples of the good work that you, our faculty and staff, do to support and nurture them throughout their WKU experience and beyond.

I'm grateful for the opportunity to work alongside each and every one of you. Thank you for all that you do. I hope the summer months will provide an opportunity for you to enjoy time with family and friends and to relax and rejuvenate for the coming year.

Go Tops!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Timothy C. Caboni', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Timothy C. Caboni